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REMARKS

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I have carefully reviewed the Office Action of October 4, 2007 by Examiner Redding. Claims 9-17, 19-23, and 32-37, drawn to non-elected inventions, have been canceled with the Applicants' reserving the right to file divisional patent applications on the subject matter at issue in the canceled claims. The remaining claims as amended and as originally presented define over the Examiner's prior art rejections for the specific reasons set forth below.

Amended Claim 1

In Schweigert, the only thing that can read on the collection bag as recited in claim 1 is the combination of the wheeled cart 10 and the upper cover 12. The wheeled cart arguably provides the bottom of the bag and the upper cover the top of the bag and **together** they define an enclosure that retains the debris. However, as shown in Figs. 5 and 6 of Schweigert, a separate flexible liner 20 is used to roll the debris out of the cart 19 after the cover 12 is folded forwardly.

Clearly, the collection bag and wheeled cart in claim 1 are separate components. The cart recited in claim 1 is not part of the enclosed bag in which the debris is collected and contained. In addition, assuming arguendo that the cart is properly considered to be part of the bag, claim 1 as amended requires "the collection bag being detachable from the cart in a debris disposal mode". The cart can't be detached from itself if it forms part of the bag. Thus, claim 1 as amended is allowable over the combination of Black & Decker and Schweigert.

The Examiner's alternative combination of Muller and Madhat is not proper and would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. Muller teaches a cart for holding an open topped "rigid polyethylene" tub while Madhat discloses a flexible collection bag. The two are not nearly the same and the cart of Muller is not designed for and would not work to support the bag of Madhat. In fact, **Madhat teaches away** from supporting his bag on a separate wheeled cart by directly attaching ground engaging wheels to the bottom of his bag. Since

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Madhat's bag already rolls over the ground, there is no reason or motivation for using some other wheeled cart, designed for a dramatically different rigid tub, to somehow support Madhat's flexible bag.

Accordingly, claim 1 and its dependent claims are allowable.

Amended Claim 27

Claim 27 as amended recites, *inter alia*, both of the following limitations:

"(a) a flexible collection bag that can collapse and expand, the bag in a debris collection mode receiving and storing the debris ejected by the blower/vac;" and

"(c) a wheeled cart having an upwardly facing cavity for releasably receiving at least a lower portion of the collection bag in the debris collection mode and for supporting the collection bag in the debris collection mode for movement over the ground, the cart having a longest dimension that is generally horizontal relative to the ground."

Such a claim is not taught or suggested by Schweigert for the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1. Furthermore, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to dismount the wheels from the flexible bag of Madhat only to then place the bag into a cart designed for a rigid tub. Accordingly, claim 27 as amended is allowable over both of the alternative rejections set forth by the Examiner or any other conceivable reading or combination of the references.

Canceled Claim 29

Claim 29 has been canceled not because the Applicants agree with the rejections of claim 29, but simply because claim 29 is close enough to claim 30 that the Applicants will focus their attention on claim 30 instead. Some of the language of claim 29 has now been inserted into a new claim 39 that depends from claim 30.

Original Claim 30

Claim 30 as originally presented recited, *inter alia*, the following:

"wherein the connecting hose is coupled to the cart at a location that allows the cart to be pulled by the connecting hose and to roll and trail behind the blower/vac as a user operates the blower/vac and walks forwardly with the blower/vac."

This limitation is not taught or suggested in any of the prior art references of record.

In Schweigert, there is no teaching that the connecting hose is coupled to the cart at a location that allows the cart to be pulled by the connecting hose. Details of the cart/hose interaction are not set forth in Schweigert, but are set forth in the other patents incorporated by reference in Schweigert, particularly in US Patent 4,787,197. See the incorporation by reference clause at Col. 2 of Schweigert, Lines 57-63. The 197 patent shows that the cart 10 in Schweigert is actually pulled by a riding lawn mower to which the cart 10 is hitched with there being only a sliding fit of the connecting hose to a plastic sleeve in the upper cover. See Col. 7 of the 197 patent, Lines 29-55. Thus, Schweigert does not disclose a cart that is pulled by a blower/vac connecting hose coupled to the cart, but instead by a hitch coupled to the rear of a riding mower.

Moreover, even assuming the cart 10 in Schweigert did not have a hitch and one tried to pull the cart using the hose, this would be ineffective given where the hose connects (high up on the front of the upper cover) in relation to the wheels (low at the rear of the cart 10). The only thing the hose would do if it attempted to pull the cart 10 would be to tip it over forwardly given the large lever arm between the hose location on the front cover and the wheels of the cart. The hose in Schweigert isn't in the right location to itself pull the cart.

Neither Muller nor Madhat correct this deficiency. In Madhat, the hose connects directly to the collection bag and is not coupled to anything that could be a cart, as required by claim 30. Since Muller has no hose at all, he teaches nothing of relevance to claim 30.

Accordingly, claim 30 and its dependent claims are allowable.

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New Claim 40

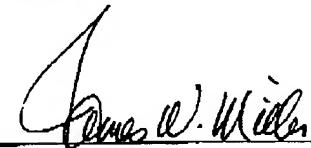
The Examiner had indicated in the Office Action that original claim 7 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. New claim 40 incorporates the subject matter from claim 7 that the Applicants believe distinguishes over the art even though many of the limitations of the intervening claims have NOT been incorporated into new claim 40. Despite this difference in scope between claim 7 and new claim 40, new claim 40 is also believed to be allowable due to the recited structure that connects one end of the collection bag to one end of the cart.

Summary

All of the claims remaining in this application are allowable over the prior art rejections used by the Examiner in the Office Action of October 4, 2007. Prompt allowance and passage to issue of this application is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,



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